

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa

**Application ID:** 13AC145546

**Program Name:** Conservation Corps Minnesota

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

- (+) The extent of environmental damage is supported by data from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The severity of racial disparity in unemployment is illustrated using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and a report from the Economic Policy Institute. These data sources are credible and reliable, lending weight to the applicant's statement of need.
- (+) The applicant also highlighted the need to engage the youth in meaningful civic duties that will improve their employability skills, deepen their knowledge in water quality management and land restoration, and at the same time educate them in energy conservation.
- (+) The application explained how AmeriCorps members will make a greater impact by generating more service hours compared to the existing staff by recruiting volunteers and involving community and partners' participation.
- (+) The applicant seemed to focus its efforts to request only those Members needed and clearly delineated the locations in which its Members will serve. The activities proposed to occur by the applicant's requested Members appears achievable based on the detailed and clear information provided.
- (+) The applicant stated that it will measure its impact with the collection of data from Members through daily field reports collected bi-monthly and verified and tracked by staff, as well as through partner organization surveys and 21<sup>st</sup> skills assessments for youth. These reporting mechanisms appear thorough and at a high frequency such that data will be accurately collected and recorded.
- (+) The benefits of service learning, the development of work-readiness skills and the Conservation Corps' program design are supported by numerous research reports and a research-validated, field-tested evaluation tool. Knowledge and job skills assessments along with project accomplishment reports display the strength of the program's design and the success of the project's conservation efforts.
- (-) The evidence for loss of connection with the environment leading to obesity and other health issues as well as the

negative impact on tourism to state parks and other natural resources lacks detail.

(-) The applicant's targets for job readiness were not clearly stated in the narrative.

(-) It is unclear whether or not energy efficiency will be part of the program's educational efforts.